

Ramsey Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the
Cambridgeshire Weekly News, its sister title.

They are supplemented by some articles published in the
Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

Most were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at
bit.ly/CambsCollection

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in
touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library
where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the
1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

1898 03 04

Ramsey Methodist church, p3

1898 06 25

On Thursday last Captain Mutton of the Ramsey fire brigade gave out to his fireman the new brass helmets recently ordered by the Urban District Council. They were supplied by Messrs Merryweather. Ramsey Fishing Association has been holding a tournament for a week. Anglers could go on any one day. Only three anglers had weighed in by 9 pm on Thursday night. Mr F Haythorpe fished from 4 am to 9 pm for his 11lb 1oz. Ten or twelve were out on Thursday, but sport was poor.

1898 07 25

Ramsey fair which has been held on Thursday (a day earlier) Friday and Saturday, has been about the same as usual. The chief attraction have been the gondolas and cinematograph. Most of the stalls left for Warboys feast

1900 01 02

Evison's Manure Works, Ramsey, were destroyed by fire, damage to the extent of many thousands of pounds being caused. Five hundred tons of sulphuric acid were released through leaden tanks melting and the liquid flooded the premises. Considerable quantities of the acid flowed into a branch of the River Nene, which is close to the gutted factory, and thousands of fish were destroyed. Stansted vicar & war, p3

1900 01 25

St Ives Rural Council considered the state of the roads. They were not very good and the surveyor could not make them so without the use of a steamroller. The question of expense was not a very serious one as shown by the Ramsey Council purchasing a roller. They generally considered themselves equal to Ramsey Council, but they were certainly behind them. The cost was £470. The chairman said the roads were not in a bad state and the only complaints they received were from cyclists who did not contribute one penny to the rates.

1900 06 09

The annual show of the Hunts Agricultural Society took place in the Hassock Meadow, Ramsey, and the only thing to mar the exhibition was the unpropitious weather. During the morning horse shoeing and poultry trussing demonstrations took place, and there were lectures on butter making and kindred subjects, which had an attraction for many. A large number of the gentry and agriculturists from the surrounding countryside put in an appearance.

1905 07 19

Ramsey theft, p3

1906 04 05

Lord de Ramsey's notice to all the allotment holders on his Huntingdonshire estates has caused a sensation. He writes: "For 19 years I have endeavoured to improve the conditions of the working householders in those parishes where I own land. I have 44 fields set out in 1072 allotments and have established small holdings. But there have been insinuations of over-renting, favouritism and such charges so the scheme must be abandoned." 06 04 05

1906 04 18

An alarming railway accident occurred at Ramsey on the branch line to Holme. A train of four coaches, full of people, did not pull up as usual but ran past the platform at a speed of 20 mph. Against the buffer stop there were two horse boxes and with a terrific impact, heard a mile off, the train dashed into them. The engine was damaged but the coaches were not derailed though the passengers were terribly shaken. 06 04 18a

1906 10 30

The question of the Ramsey allotments was raised in the House of Commons. Lord de Ramsey had let over 1,000 acres of his land to 800 men but after his brother was defeated in the election he gave them notice to quit, saying the men were discontented. They formed a Land Club and negotiated with his Lordship. He agreed to let the land, but at increased rent. This has been rejected by the men. 06 10 30c

1906 10 30

De Ramsey allotments, p4 *

1907 03 26

Lord de Ramsey's allotment tenants – 07 03 26

1911 01 20

Ramsey Hollow farm arson – 11 01 20f

1911 06 16

A disastrous fire at Ramsey destroyed half-a-dozen houses in the main street. It started in the chimney of a thatched house and the interior walls being of old-fashioned reed and plaster, the property was almost instantly ablaze. A lodger got out safely, though singed, as did the owner of the house, a small farmer. But his wife hurried upstairs to recover some trinkets and was not seen again. Her charred body was found at the foot of the stairs. By her side was a box containing a watch, rings and money. The town of Ramsey is largely composed of thatched cottages. 11 06 16b

1914 08 14

Rumours of the presence of spies have been circulating during the last few days. At Warboys the telegraph wire which rings the signal bell at the station on the Somersham to Ramsey branch line was cut during the night and another partially severed. Two foreign gentlemen were seen by Mr W.J. Unwin acting in a suspicious manner at Histon. He followed them to Girton and at each of the three bridges they stopped and examined them. At Girton he phoned the police and a constable was sent out. The men were requested to go to the police station which they did without demure and after questioning were liberated at once. Meanwhile police have been issued with rifles 14 08 14 p7

1924 03 12

A disastrous fire broke out on the premises of Mrs Baldock, at Warboys. The local manual engine was brought out, and the Ramsey Brigade was sent for, but owing to the strong wind their task was a helpless one as the flames leapt rapidly from building to building. The fire spread to Mr Dorrington's premises, Mr Allpress's carpenters shop was burnt down and several small cottages attacked. It is some time since a fire of such magnitude occurred in the locality

1929 11 28

An amazing story was told at Huntingdon police court when a woman was charged with obtaining goods and money by false pretences. Edward Elphick, house furnisher of Huntingdon, said she had paid with a cheque that was returned marked 'No account'. Albert Bigmore, jeweller of Ramsey told a similar story. Police said she had made many untruthful statements. She came here about a year ago from Essex where she left her husband and four children and lived at Warboys with another man. She then moved to Wistow, Woodhurst, St Ives and Houghton before taking a cottage at Hartford. Wherever she lived she left behind debts and non-payment of rent. She wrote many letters to herself which purported to be from her uncle promising large sums of money and a motor car. She also claimed to be the widow of a naval officer. None of these were true.

1930 09 22

There are currently very few people out of work in Ramsey but when the potatoes and sugar beet were lifted unemployment would be very, very acute. Labourers are so well paid that farmers cannot afford to employ them when they have only routine work to do. As soon as the harvest is completed they are

thrown off wholesale and this is a heavy time for the Guardians until the spring. There is more actual distress amongst these highly paid men than from any other district. 30 09 22b

1931 12 11

Manorial rolls dating back to the 18th century were produced as evidence over a disputed piece of land in High Street, Ramsey. It was once called Vesey's Yard and had been conveyed with the right of bridle and barrow way to the defendant's land. He was a potato merchant who stored his empty sacks in the yard, sometimes he put bags of rotten potatoes there. But neighbours said that although the old cottages, which had been pulled down in 1910, had right-of-way it had never been used for storage. 31 12 11b

1932 08 05

Seven pigs were roasted alive in a fire which destroyed buildings at Manor Farm, Great Raveley. Mrs F. Herbert made a great effort to save them but failed owing to the intense heat. She threw buckets of water on the flames and prevented them reaching the house until the arrival of Ramsey Fire Brigade helped extinguish the blaze. 32 08 05b

1932 08 12

Sir – On Saturday night I saw a meteorite near Ramsey. It dropped in a slanting direction towards the southern horizon and appeared to be travelling in half circles. A long trail of greenish light was left behind, although the meteorite itself was yellow and even more brilliant than lighting. It was not like any other shooting star, five of which I saw before dawn. – J.A. Burn-Murdoch. 32 08 12c

1934 04 10

Ramsey water scheme – 33 04 10a

1933 10 06

Ramsey's water is unfit for drinking unless it is boiled and filtered. In 1909 a report on the sanitary conditions revealed that the most urgent need was a safe public water supply. The same sources of water, which were then criticised very severely, are in use today. Between 1920 and 1930 various schemes had been suggested but the cost was always prohibitive. Ramsey is purely an agricultural district with no factories or industries and a water scheme was the only hope for development, either industrially or residentially. 33 10 06

1934 06 28

Historic Ramsey Abbey may become a secondary school. The Government had approved the replacement of the present old wooden hut by a permanent building and the Hon Mrs Broughton would let the Abbey and grounds on a 99 year lease at an annual payment of one pound. Unfortunately there were no plans and maintenance would be a large item of expenditure. The old gateway had been taken over by the Ministry of Works as an ancient monument. 34 06 28

1934 07 26

Ramsey abbey school future – 34 07 26

1934 12 20

When a foreman railway porter reported a burglary at Warboys station little did he realise it would lead to the apprehension of his wife on a charge of stealing money from the office. Although the station was closed during the weekend it was the practice to leave money there. Police found a window had been broken but it was discovered the office could only have been entered by somebody with a key. The porter sat in the court at Ramsey while the woman tearfully confessed to taking two ten-shilling notes, two half-crowns and a penny. She was bound over to be of good behaviour. 34 12 20c

1935 06 21

A large granary at Longland's Farm, Fenton, near Warboys, was destroyed by a fire which began on the top floor where two tons of flake maize was stored. A week ago the maize, which was kept in sacks, was found to be overheated and was turned in order to cool down. At 10.40pm a maroon was fired in Ramsey to arouse the fire brigade and 15 minutes later they were at the scene. In a little more than half an hour they had the blaze under control. 35 06 21

1935 11 19

An agricultural labourer lost all his possessions in a fire which destroyed his cottage at Turf Fen, Warboys. Returning at 8pm he saw smoke and flames pouring through a window. He smashed in the front door with an axe and was able to recover some money belonging to his wife. This was the only thing he managed to save. The flames made short work of everything except the brick walls of the five-roomed cottage whose majesty was soon disturbed by the Ramsey Fire Brigade. When they found that water was not having the desired effect they pushed the walls over with poles. 35 11 19

1938 05 06

A tablet was unveiled at Ramsey's new grammar school in memory of the late Hon Mrs Broughton. She spent much of her childhood at the Abbey and offered it to the Governors so that its ancient beauty might be preserved. The building dates back to 989 but was extensively altered in the nineteenth century with a new wing. It now houses the headmaster's residential quarters, assembly hall, laboratories and five classrooms. 38 05 06a

1939 03 11

Ramsey St Mary haulage contractor's problems 39 03 11a, b

1939 05 18

Godmanchester council's action in purchasing a siren for A.R.P. purposes was unauthorised and they must pay for it themselves. Everybody had thought the County Council would pay as they were responsible for public air raid warnings all over the county. But they had decided sirens were only needed at Fletton, Ramsey, Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots. The Huntingdon siren, supplemented by one at the hosiery mills was sufficient for Godmanchester 39 05 18b

1940 06 28

Awarded D.F.C.—Acting Flight Lt. J. W. C. Simpson. R.A.F., a native of Ramsey St. Mary, has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. While leading a section over Northern France, he met a superior enemy force and destroyed three aircraft. In all he has accounted for seven.

1947 11 22

The outbreak of fowl pest in Cambridgeshire has reached serious proportions and up to Thursday no fewer than 23 separate cases have been confirmed. Altogether a total of 3,850 birds have had to be slaughtered. The disease is believed to have been brought into the county by birds sold at Cambridge market on October 6th and 13th. The first outbreak was confirmed at Impington and it rapidly spread. One section of Messrs Chivers pedigree flock has been affected and some 60 birds have had to be killed. The pest has resulted in the killing of hundreds of head of poultry in Hunts. Outbreaks have been reported at Brampton and Colne in addition to the case at Ramsey several weeks ago

1948 02 16

The first case dealt with by Mr Harry Edwards, a leading psychic healer at the service of healing of the Cambridge Spiritualist Healing Guild was a four-year old of Ramsey who was afflicted with infantile paralysis last August and has not been able to walk properly since. He was carried by his mother on to the dais wearing an iron support on his left leg. This was removed. Mr Edwards placed his hands around the boy's back and a few seconds later he was walking. For the remainder of the afternoon he was romping around the front of the hall as happy as any child could be

1952 09 10

Ramsey Abbey Gatehouse was officially handed over to the National Trust. Major Broughton recalled that Ramsey Abbey was his wife's childhood home and after her death he had restored the Gatehouse as a memorial to her and presented it to the Trust. Of the Abbey itself there only remains the 13th century Lady Chapel incorporated in the Abbey Grammar School. After the dissolution of the monastery in 1539 the buildings were used as a quarry, Gonville and Caius College being built from the stone.

1954 01 15

Cambridge Waterworks is to supply the Ramsey and St Ives Joint Water Board with a quarter of a million gallons of water a day until 1965. The Board was created in 1937 but its initial plans for abstracting water from the River Ouse had to be abandoned because of 'gross pollution' from untreated sewage. They have bored four wells at Earith but other sites did not produce results so the only alternative was to buy water in bulk, although this means laying 12 miles of mains.

1954 06 03

Eastern Electricity says that more villages in the Ely area are to be connected to the public supply in the next six months. Already Mepal, Coveney, Pondersbridge and Ramsey Heights have been connected and Prickwillow, Barway and outlying parts of Haddenham and Littleport will follow. But it can only be economically justified if farmers recognise that electricity be used to the fullest extent as an aid to production and not just for lighting, radio and television. It increases their output and hastens the day when electricity can be made available throughout the whole of the countryside.

1960 02 19

Three sections of disused railway lines might be used in connection with the construction of future new roads in Huntingdonshire. They are the line and bridge from Bluntisham to Earith on the St Ives-Earith-Ely branch line, the bridge over the Great Ouse between St Ives station and the level crossing on the B1040 and the line and bridges from Huntingdon to Kimbolton. But councillors see no use for the line from Ramsey East station to Warboys. 60 02 19a

1960 02 23

The News has provided a vital lead in a search for some 350-year-old manuscripts which may hold the key to the history of the Carmelite religious order. An American researcher appealed for help to find the documents which were last heard of in the Philips Collection of historical papers. The News ordered its correspondents to make inquiries and they were discovered in the library of a former Ramsey schoolteacher. Now the researcher is heading to Ramsey straight away. The Carmelites settled in Chesterton in 1237 but then moved to a site near the new Queens' College buildings. 60 02 23a

1960 05 13

There was grave concern at the serious water shortage in Willingham where the supply was old and inadequate for modern needs. Some houses are completely without water for many hours during the day and growers cannot irrigate their glasshouse plants. The trunk main passed near the village and the Ramsey Board had agreed that a supply could be taken from it to relieve the problem until the system was overhauled and both the quantity and the pressure brought up to a reasonable standard. 60 05 13a

1962 01 06

Water undertakings administered by local authorities in St Ives, Ramsey, Chesterton and South Cambridgeshire are to be transferred to the Cambridge University and Town Waterworks Company – 62 01 06a

1962 06 01

Willingham often finds itself with a very low water pressure because so much water is required for the village's extensive irrigation systems and its large quantity of glasshouses which almost outnumber

the houses. In 1912 the Willingham Water and General Supply Company was established. They built a water tower and installed pipes and pumps, making it one of the most important horticultural areas in the region. Chesterton RDC took over responsibility in 1955 and has agreed with the Ramsey and St Ives Joint Water Board for additional supplies in an emergency. 62 06 01b

1962 09 05

Douglas Goodwin from Field Road, Ramsey, was driving his lorry laden with four-and-a-half tons of baled straw along Newmarket Road, Cambridge, when a heavy downpour tightened the ropes and pulled the load to one side. He turned the lorry round and made for the nearest lamp post against which the load rested safely until it could be transferred to another vehicle to complete its journey to Stowmarket 62 09 05a

1963 03 15

The battle of the fens is on with councils in direct competition with each other in efforts to attract more light industry and halt the migration of their populations. Chatteris has a good labour force but every day 200 women leave to work in factories around Cambridge. March has a large railway marshalling yard employing 1,500 people and wants industry in case it is reduced in size. Ramsey are trying to get firms from Middlesex, bringing 500 employees into the town. It has little to attract them but hope that 'bingo and the cinemas' will be enough amusement until it can grow. 63 03 15

1963 03 16

An 89-year-old lady was sitting quietly by her fireside in a 19th-century cottage at Godmanchester when a lorry loaded with eight tons of carrots ran off the road and wrecked the empty house next door. Although half a ton of bricks and masonry crashed into the side of the cab, the driver was uninjured. The carrots, from Ramsey, were on their way to Wigan. Surveyors examined the badly-damaged cottage while the lady went on sitting by her cosy fireside next door. She enjoys watching the traffic go past and does not want to move. 63 03 16

1963 04 01

Cambridge Water Company has become responsible for public water to the areas previously supplied by the Borough of St Ives, Ramsey UDC and the Rural Districts of Chesterton, South Cambs and St Ives. 63 04 01a & b

1964 05 20

Ramsey golf club to open – feature – 64 05 20

1965 04 19

Ramsey Angel pub lintel may be by Robert Adam – 65 04 19b

1972 07 27

By throwing out plans to fluoridate Huntingdon and Peterborough's water supply, the county council have only postponed the day for two years. Because when the new health authorities take over, there is little doubt that fluoride will be in every water supply in England & Wales. Their decision means that for the sake of having no fluoride in the water supplies to a small part of the area around St Ives and Ramsey, they have denied fluoride to almost 200,000 people in the Cambridgeshire & Isle of Ely area. This is because both councils were linked in a £68,000 plan to be carried out by the Cambridge Water Company

1979 06 29

The first three factories to be built in a town by the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas have been opened in Wisbech. They will be followed by others at Littleport, Ramsey, Chatteris and March. The policy had been to build them in truly rural areas but they decided to give special help to small towns where job opportunities were very limited. MP Clement Freud said it is helping people with cottage industries to take a stride forward; they cannot afford the overheads of a modern and efficient factory but this offers them units at a very good rent and will help them grow.

1980 10 01

The county fire service will be ruined if planned cuts of £200,000 are implemented. At Cambridge the number of firemen will be cut by 20 and one of the three pumping appliances scrapped. There will be just one pump at Ramsey, March and Huntingdon and even then redundancies might still be needed. And if the firemen settle for a pay rise of more than 11 per cent there will have to be extra cuts. The news was greeted with horror by councillors who say it would put the county in peril. 80 10 01

1981 11 02

The death of a top Cambridgeshire policeman whose car left the road which runs beside Ramsey Forty-Foot drain has prompted calls for immediate road improvements. The five-mile stretch from Leonard Childs Bridge has been condemned as a 'death trap'. During the past 50 years at least 100 vehicles have gone in and during the war eight Army vehicles followed each other into the river. It should be shut down, but barriers would be an improvement. 81 11 02b

1985 06 29

Cambridge castle mound is being seriously damaged by the feet of thousands of visitors every year and the playful attentions of hundreds of children who have created two impromptu 'slides' down the steep slopes. Now archaeologists are to close the footpath and carry out much-needed repairs. Many other monuments are also in need of repair, including Burwell castle, Booth's Hill at Ramsey and the Devil's Dyke 85 06 29

1986 11 26

County Councillors have given permission for private developers to build sheltered housing for the elderly on public land. The scheme will provide new homes at Westward Ho! Ramsey, 25 bungalows at Home Close, Fulbourn and accommodation for another 23 in March. Some councillors disagree with doing deals with private firms who might exploit the elderly for profit. But it means a lot more places than the council could possibly afford. 86 11 26b

1987 08 13

Robbers brandishing a sawn-off shotgun and a pistol burst in to the village post office and stores at Bury, near Ramsey, and fled with over £5,000. 87 08 13

1988 09 28

The Fenland Witch is a new Saturday bus service set up to help villagers in the Somersham area. It will enable people from Pidley, Broughton, the Raveleys and Upwood to travel to Huntingdon or Ramsey giving time for shopping and linking to connections to Cambridge or Peterborough. The vehicle has been hired from Dew and Sons by a former bus driver more as a community service than a commercial venture. 87 09 28

1989 04 18

An A-10 tankbuster jet taking part in close ground attack manoeuvres ploughed into a field near Ramsey Forty Foot and exploded in a ball of flame. It came down close to several farms, tearing across a road and narrowly missing two vans as it disintegrated. US troops scoured the wreckage for potentially dangerous training ammunition. It is the third accident locally in four months: one crashed into a field at Earith and another crashed off the end of the Alconbury runway 89 04 18

1989 08 23

At one stage Ramsey was facing a 'stores war' with the Gateway improvement scheme & the Co-op planning to build a Rainbow superstore at the edge of the town. But the Rainbow scheme was rejected and Gateway's plans did not get off the ground. The Co-op also closed its Ramsey shop and people are fed up with the existing facilities. Now the town centre could be redeveloped in a £30 million shopping scheme with a Budgens supermarket, nine shops and a bistro 89 08 23a